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Courtesy photo





# World discovers Minerva Teichert

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**P**ROVO — Her name may not be as familiar as her paintings, but Minerva Teichert is slowly becoming better recognized as her works appear more frequently in public places. And people are beginning to appreciate both the art and the artist who claimed, "I MUST paint. It's a disease!"

Paint she did, nearly every day of her long life. Though her "studio" was also the family's living room in Cokeville, Wyo., and so small she had to fold her huge canvases in half, tack them to the wall and paint her murals one side at a time, she persisted. "Unless I can paint a little each day," she wrote in a letter, "I think my day is lost."

Copies of Teichert's work — depictions of pioneer life, Bible scenes, or images of animals in motion, all rendered in her characteristic style of strong outlines and blurred images — have appeared in LDS Church magazines as illustrations, especially during this Sesquicentennial year.

That use fits well with her philosophy that a mural should tell a story that's quickly understandable even to the casual observer — "that he who runs may read," as she often put it.

## Pioneer Centennial

Her 6-by-11-foot mural depicting "1847 Pioneers — Madonna at Dawn" appears on the cover of "Images of Faith," a catalog produced by the Museum of Church History and Art, which owns the original.



Minerva Teichert

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Further afield, that same painting and a section about the artist are included in the "Independent Spirits" catalog by the Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Los Angeles. The scene was one of several she painted to commemorate the centennial of the pioneers' 1847 entrance into the Salt Lake Valley.

Closer to home, two oil-on-wood paintings, one of a woman in a yellow dress and another of a woman spinning, hang in Lehi Junior High School. A large painting of Christ holding a black lamb in his arms graces the foyer of the Mount Timpanogos Temple. The Springville Museum of Art holds a 1940's-era "Jesus Christ is the God of that

Land" and 1939's "Indian Captives at Night" in its collection. The World Room of the Manti Temple features one of the artist's greatest works, "The Pageant of History," commissioned by the LDS Church when Teichert was nearly 60.

## Special exhibition

BYU's Museum of Art is hosting a special exhibition through mid-May of a particular group of Teichert's works. The 43 Book of Mormon scenes, shown in the exhibit as studies and sketches as well as finished murals, are part of BYU's permanent collection. Teichert provided a college education for many of her children, nieces and nephews, and friends by paying tuition with her paintings during the Depression years and beyond, dealing directly with BYU presidents until Ernest Wilkinson took the reigns. Unable to interest the LDS Church in the Book of Mormon series, painted between 1946 and 1952, she donated them to BYU in the late 1960s.

They're a small fraction of an estimated 1,000 paintings — many of which she'd given as gifts to family and friends — that Teichert left when she died at age 87 in 1976.

"There are only two reasons for painting," Teichert once wrote. "Either a thing must be very beautiful or it must be very important." Her work reflects both.

Born in Ogden in 1888, Minerva Kolhepp Teichert always carried a sketch pad with her as she did chores around the farm and helped her father in the fields in Idaho's Snake River Valley. She got her first taste of real art at 14 when she worked as

See TEICHERT, C2





Courtesy photo

**Mormon experience:** "Miracle of the Gulls" is one of many works Teichert painted to illustrate the Mormon story, a task she felt she was called to perform.



Courtesy photo

**In motion:** Teichert's "Indian Night Raid" shows her knack for depicting animals in motion and her love of the pioneer era.